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**Testimony to Program Review and Investigations Committee on Bill 5036: An Act
Implementing the Recommendations of the Program Review and Investigations
Committee**

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. This is a photograph of my brother Arthur E. Roberts, Jr., and I am Barbara Roberts-Hirsch, his sister and guardian. Arthur is a 66 year old gentleman, injured at birth, deprived of oxygen, which led to mild mental retardation. Some years later Art was placed in a community home setting, and into a job based in the community, with little supervision, which ultimately led to Art suffering a total psychotic break, and a new dual diagnosis of manic depression/schizophrenia. Group home placement was not an option at that time, and Art was taken to Southbury Training School, which has been his (second) home for more than thirty years. I am here today to address my concerns, and questions about the economic appropriateness of closing Southbury Training School. We have heard people talk today about "choices," and I wish to add, that despite the admonitions of the ARC groups, group home placement is not the correct choice for all citizens with disabilities.

- 1.) I maintain that the facilities at STS are very beautiful and adequate for the residents living there. The staff is superbly trained, empathetic and most importantly, these facilities and staff are **ALREADY IN PLACE!**
- 2.) My brother has access to excellent services on a 24/7 needs basis. These services **ARE ALREADY IN PLACE**, and include: medical, nursing, psychiatry, EMT's, a Health Care Unit, dental, podiatry, PT, OT, and more. A real concern is that in a community setting, there would be limited access to these services, as witnessed by geriatric citizens who wait long hours in clinic settings, ERs, or doctors' offices, waiting for the very busy facility to see them, if they get seen at all. My brother would be one more geriatric citizen, dumped into an already overloaded medical system of Medicare/ Medicaid. As a registered nurse, in the greater Hartford community for nearly forty years, I have seen the inadequate health care system, i.e. in the case of one of my patients who have been back and forth to the UConn Dental Clinic multiple times, and have been waiting over two years for her dentures to be repaired and replaced. An additional concern is that these compromised